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R 011306Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0090
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5846
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 001979

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/31/2019

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SUBJECT: UNRWA AT 60 EVENT: JORDAN DEBATING SUPPORT FOR
ISRAELI SPEAKING ROLE

REF: STATE 90251

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Poloff delivered reftel demarche to Samer Naber, Deputy Director of the Foreign Minister's Private Office, on August 31. Naber said that no final decision had yet been made about Jordan's stance on the UNRWA at 60 event, but indicated that interagency discussions on the issue had been heated. Naber welcomed our points on the issue, saying that they would help to focus the MFA's discussions with other interested parties in the Jordanian government.

¶2. (C) Naber said that Jordanian security agencies have become concerned that UNRWA's budget woes will have a direct impact on Jordan's internal security posture. The General Intelligence Directorate (GID) recently sent an internal memo to the Foreign Ministry voicing alarm at the closure of schools, strikes by UNRWA employees, and increasing unemployment in the Palestinian refugee camps which UNRWA administers. In this context, Naber indicated that Jordan is not looking to draw negative attention to UNRWA's mission and funding at this time. Jordan would prefer a non-political event that focuses on the humanitarian achievements of UNRWA and the need to support the organization politically and monetarily.

¶3. (C) Naber said that Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh and Queen Rania will represent Jordan at the UNRWA at 60 event, although the Queen's attendance is still being closely held.

¶4. (C) Comment: Jordan's stance on Israeli participation in the UNRWA at 60 event is part of a complicated web that includes moves towards a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, domestic unease over the role of Palestinians, and the Mughrabi Gate issue (septel). It is unclear at this point whether the hawkish voices of the political elite who want to send a tough message to Israel will prevail over those who favor a low-key approach. It is clear, however, that the UNRWA at 60 debate is being seen as part of a larger political debate rather than as an isolated decision which can be decided on its own merits. Embassy Amman will continue to follow up and report on this issue as events warrant. End Comment.
Beecroft